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"the journal of Revolutionary Action"

War and terror in the age of global empire

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By Sergio Fiedler editors@loveandrage.org

The images of devastation and human suffering shown by the news reports coming from New York have shocked the world. The number of victims caused by the Kamikaze attack on the WTC and the Pentagon on September the 11th is already in the thousands. Most of those who died were mostly workers of the services industry, not the rich and powerful who hide in their mansions and bunkers. The victims were men and women who worked as employees in offices, doing cleaning or catering. They were fire fighters, janitors and nurses. They were not simply "white Americans" but people from different parts of the world who came to the US with the dream of living a better life. As anti-capitalists and revolutionaries, we express our solidarity with all the innocent victims of this carnage and share with the people on the street our rejection of the use of terror as a political strategy.

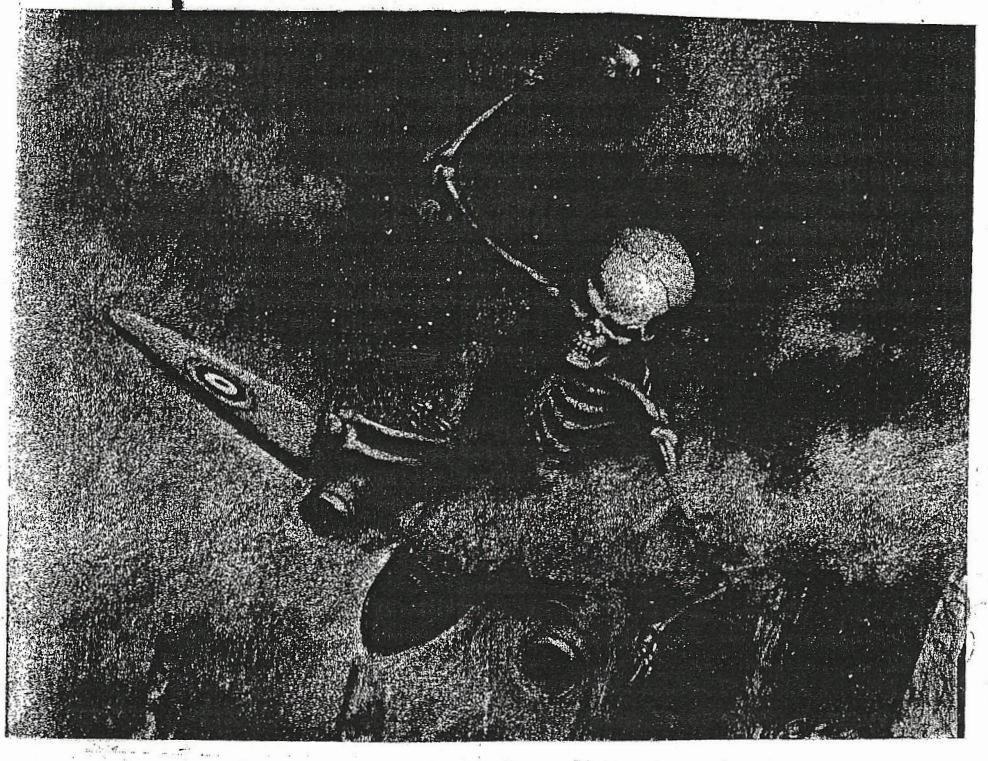
However, this is not the first time a terrorist act of such a large magnitude has been perpetrated against disarmed civilians. Despite claiming to defend democracy and freedom, the US government itself has carried out devastating bombing campaigns on civilians, and actively supported political regimes that have violated human rights on a massive scale. Remember Vietnam, Cambodia, Guatemala, Chile, Palestine, Iraq and the Balkans. The cold-blooded killing of people in New York is as horrifying as the bombing of Iraqi civilians by the US military. With the multitudes of the world we would like to enter into a minute of silence for those who died in the US on September the 11th. But for that mourning to have real meaning we must also pay our respect to all the victims of the terror inflicted by the US government throughout the 20th century; all those millions who have died nameless and faceless as a result of US sponsored violence and oppression, all those whose lives have been of too little value to occupy a place within the spectacle of the global media.

Instead of supporting the belligerent reaction of the US government against an invisible and unknown enemy, this is perhaps the time for the people of the US to reflect upon the political reasons behind the immense hatred that inspired this terrorist attack. Today the main question arising from this tragedy is not who did it, but why it happened. This was not the result of external forces of darkness that have infiltrated Western civilisation from the outside. In the new imperial economy of corporate globalisation, there is no outside. These attacks are not the plot of an archaic religious fundamentalism, but the product and the symbol of the inequalities and abuses of a global system of power within which the US government and corporations have played a major role.

This is the opportunity, therefore, to question US foreign policy rather than rallying behind it. To miss this opportunity would simply let George W. Bush and all of the other powers that have come to his support a free hand to let loose perhaps the most genocidal global warfare and dictatorship ever known to humanity. The US Secretary of State, Collin Powell, pointed out that people should brace themselves for a "long term conflict... fought on many fronts". With the historical record of violent US intervention into other countries, the prospect of this statement becoming a reality is terrifying. The possibility of all out war becomes even more dangerous in a terrain where international conflict has ceased to be the sum of local struggles coming together. Rather it would be waged in a global space as if there were no national boundaries. If there is a generalised military conflict as the one predicted by Powell, this will not mean simply drawing US allies together behind a war to be waged in a "distant corner" of the world. That is simply one element of it. What is in the mind of imperial policy makers is for each nation state to implement a war within their own borders against real or imagined terrorists as a part of a global strategy of repression. In Australia that would mean even more draconian border controls against undocumented immigrants, more racial vilification of ethnic communities perceived as "harbouring terrorism," and more criminalisation of anti-capitalist activists and all those who oppose the war.

The current crisis in the US is just a concentrated event where the destinies of all countries and peoples of the world are at this moment contained. Over the last twenty years we have seen the globalisation of

Capitalism=terror + war



capital, media images and political power. Now we are confronted with a further drastic advance of the imperial system of power if the main superpowers decide to draw humanity into war. In this new war there will be no visible enemy, everyone is potentially both a victim and a perpetrator. This is truly what a system of terror is based on. The Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi has already set the tone when he said that if governments now want to launch a war against terrorism, people must get used to living with less liberty. In Australia, the leader of the Labor opposition has called on Australians from "different cultural backgrounds" to dob in "terrorists" within their communities. The attack on the US has now been constructed as an attack on every power centre of the imperial system. This has been posed as a "barbaric attack on civilisation." On the other hand, the invisible and almost unrepresentable figure of "the terrorist" has been invoked as a symbolic device to further justify the penetration of State terror into the fabric of everyday life. The idea that the terrorist is this elusive

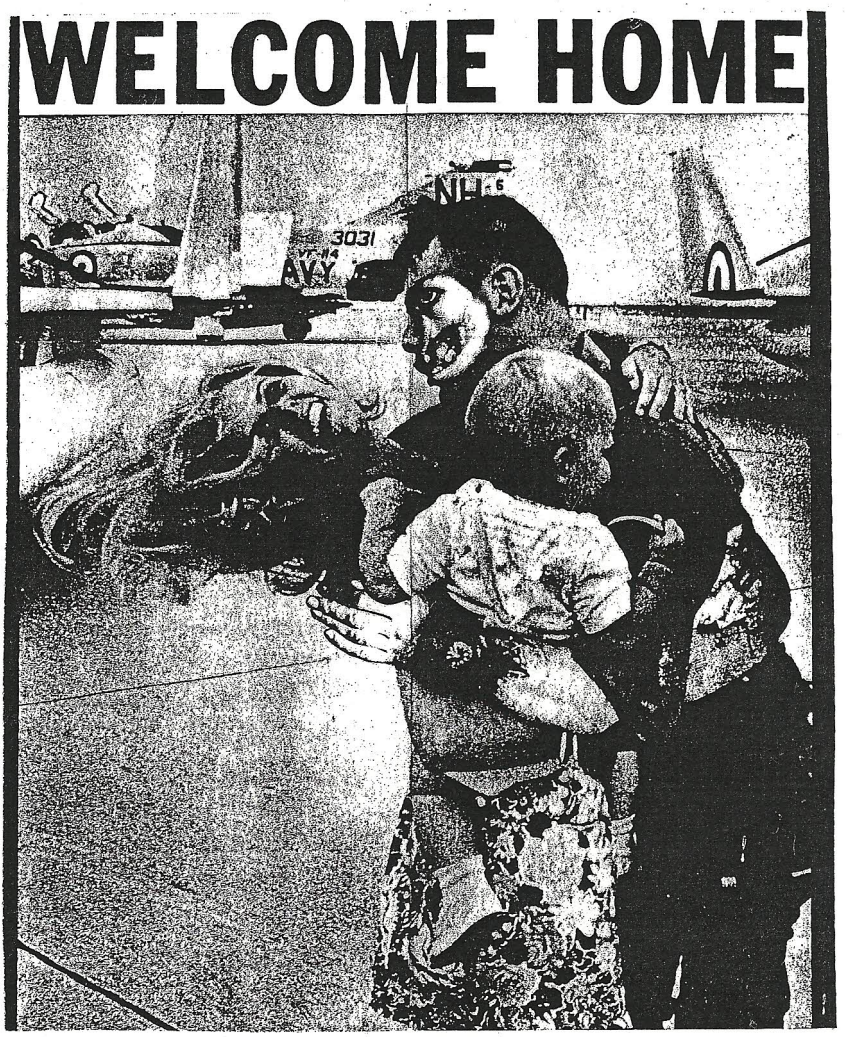
being that moves throughout society without restriction is not only a justification for massive suppression of civil liberties and the racialisation of terror, but the fostering of fear and distrust among people as the main tool to divide and disarm social movements. This is the "strategy of tension" that, from being implemented at a national level by many governments throughout the 70s and 80s, now is reaching global dimensions.

The anti-corporate and anti-capitalist rebellion initiated by the Zapatistas in Mexico and generalised with the Battle of Seattle in 1999, drastically perturbed the neo-liberal order, and opened the possibility of an alternative globalisation from below. The terrorist attack in New York and Washington and the imperial response to them, is certainly a blow to the emerging movement. We cannot keep engaging in the same type of activism without realising that the entire political scenario has radically changed after S11, 2001. An act of terror of such a scale and the anger and anguish created -at least in short term- will create some considerable public support for a war effort. Our tactics and strategies need to be re-thought. What is not going to be taken away from us, however, are the foundations of our politics: that people's liberations from oppression can only be the result of their own autonomous organisation and collective self-activity. One of the fundamental assumptions about the politics of autonomy is that our means of struggle are shaped by the goals of our struggle. This means that we cannot fight for an absolute participatory democracy through authoritarian and non-democratic means.

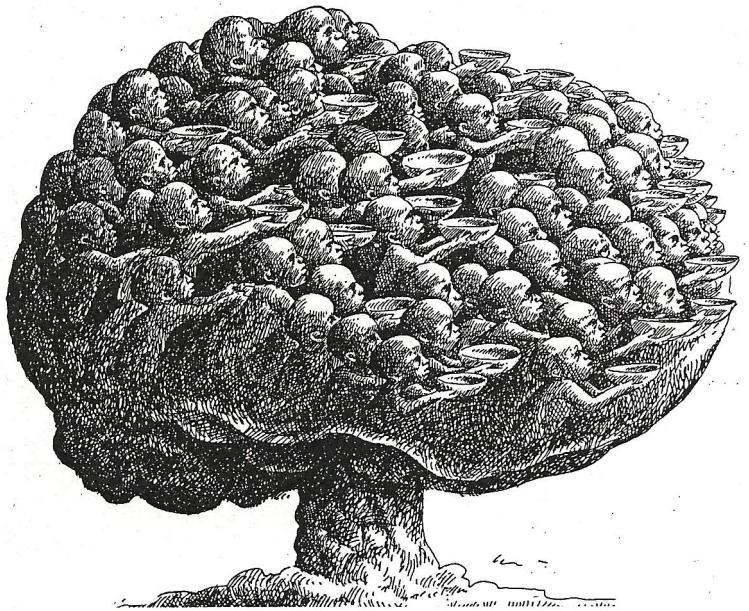
We do not seek to organise a movement simply as the function of a distant achievement or even concrete demands. Rather we see the movement as an achievement in itself, a space where we experiment with new political and social relations based on solidarity and liberty as a fundamental stepping stone for building a society based on cooperation, not private gain and repression. Those are foundations that make the politics of an anti-capitalist activist so drastically different from those who use terror to achieve a political end. Terrorism, even if motivated by genuine demands, is based on a desperate action inspired by extreme individual powerlessness. While its operational structures are often decentralised and tend to replicate autonomous and networked forms of organisation, they are bound by a central command that defines actions from the top without any process of consultation and enforcing the most rigid discipline on all of its members. The functional separation between means and ends and the disregard for internal democracy necessarily translates into an absolute disregard for the human and social impact of the terrorist act. The terrorist organisation is in this respect the mirror image of the State it seeks to attack, and therefore, completely dehumanised and dehumanising. By replicating State hierarchies and centralisation within its own body, the terrorist organisation changes nothing and gives the excuse to governments to crack down on genuine social movements.

We are all surprised, however, of the enormous effectiveness of the act of terror against the WTC to damage the system, particularly its ability to create political chaos and massive economic losses for capitalism, accelerating the process towards a new global recession. Nevertheless, the reason that revolutionary activists look at multitudes of people, working class autonomies and collective power in general as the main avenues to change the world is not because these have the social power to do so. The attack on the US proves that social power against capital can often derive from other sources, not necessarily the autonomous action of the working class. The ability to shut the system down is not what makes the working class revolutionary. Any act of terror can do that. What makes the working class a revolutionary class is not only its social ability to be against, but to pose the project of proletarian power positively, by creating within its own collective organisation the possible foundations of a new future and a new life. That is something that no act of political terror is capable of doing; terror is only capable of destroying.

Imperialism was a system of international relations where the core nation states of the world economy expanded capital investment and military intervention beyond their own borders. This system generated two distinct but connected types of conflict. On the one hand, an inter-imperialist conflict among the different superpowers competing for greater control of resources, markets and political client States around the world. On the other, anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles where oppressed peoples in Latin America, Africa and Asia struggled for the constitution of nation states that were economically and politically independent of the imperialist superpowers. These movements were known as national liberation struggles.



The reshaping of global capitalism over the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly in the neo-liberal phase, has changed this system of international relations. World capitalism has entered into an imperial stage. The creation of regional blocks, the development of multi-lateral agreements, the strengthening of all sorts of global economic and political institutions, and the fall of Soviet Union have meant that the inter-imperialist conflict between superpowers have been substituted by an extended imperial consensus and alliance among the core nation states and multinational corporations within the world economy. A new world war among superpowers is a very unlike possibility. While under imperialism the global domination was mediated by a grid of nation states, the new imperial system knows no boundaries or limits in its process of administration and control, it is immediately global as much economically as militarily. While within the new empire the US plays a dominant position, this position is only possible through a solid network of global alliances involving governments as much as non-government institutions. National liberation movements, finally unable to forge independent projects of economic and political modernisation, have been completely captured and coopted within the new imperial network. In this respect, the emergence of nationalisms and fundamentalisms in the last twenty years are not the expression of the resistance to global capital. It is precisely the decline of the nation states as a sphere of political control that has unleashed the ability



of all sort of warlords and tyrants - many of who were once supported by the imperial powers - to cement their own local sphere of power to challenge the empire from within. Osama bin Laden or the Taliban are products of global capital, not the alternative to it as national liberation movements once were. While they might enjoy popular support among the poor and the destitute, that does not transform them into progressive movements. The attack on the WTC was not the result of the violence of the oppressed getting out of hand, it was simply a capitalist line of flight going suicidal.

The war that the US government is planning and preparing with the support of all superpowers is a truly imperial war. As the war rhetoric in the US has announced, this will be a conflict that will know no boundaries and will be waged on several fronts over a long period of time. This won't be a war strictly between nation states, but between the powers of an imperial order and all those communities that are perceived as harbouring terrorism. George W. Bush has already warned that those who oppose this war effort will be categorised as enemies, forcing many governments to intensify repression against their own population with the excuse of fighting terrorism. The next war won't be a war against terrorism; it will be against humanity.

NO WAR

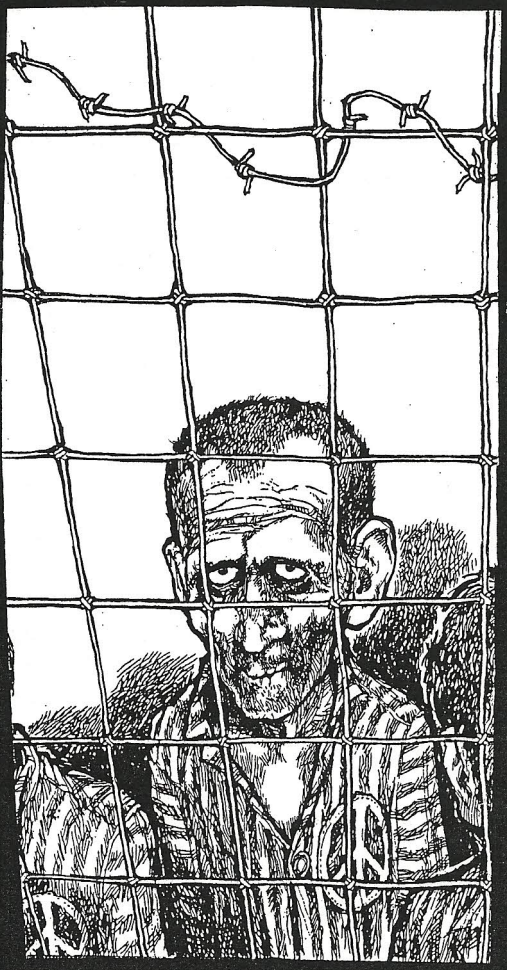
As september 11 shows, those who use terror as

a weapon are aiding the capitalist state to

terrorise, divide and repress the working class.

For many years the CIA and other security services have funded, trained and supported terrorist organisations across the globe. They use these groups to create terror and carry out operations that they feel unable to. During the

70,s, 80's and 90's the state's "war on terror" has seen wave after wave of capitalist state



repression. This continuing global war is not aimed at ending terrorism, which is a weapon of capitalism against the working class, but a war

against us and our class. As capitalism is today faced with permanent crisis we are faced with the intensification of the class war. The class war is not a war the working class wants, it is a product of the capitalist system. It is a war that is fought across the globe everyday. What we need is not

class of war.

"Oh Lucy! - You Gotta Lotta `Splainin To Do"

IF CIA AND THE GOVERNMENT WEREN'T INVOLVED IN THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

Bin Laden Met with the CIA in July and Walked Away

by Michael C. Ruppert

http://www.copvcia.com/stories/nov_2001/lucy.html

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FTW, November 2, 2001 - 1200 PST -- On October 31, the French daily Le Figaro dropped a bombshell. While in a Dubai hospital receiving treatment for a chronic kidney infection last July, Osama bin Laden met with a top CIA official - presumably the Chief of Station. The meeting, held in bin Laden's private suite, took place at the American hospital in Dubai at a time when he was a wanted fugitive for the bombings of two U.S. embassies and this year's attack on the U.S.S. Cole.

Bin Laden was eligible for execution according to a 2000 intelligence finding issued by President Bill Clinton before leaving office in January. Yet on July 14th he was allowed to leave Dubai on a private jet and there were no Navy fighters waiting to force him down.

In 1985 Oliver North - the only member of the Reagan-Bush years who doesn't appear to have a hand in the current war - sent the Navy and commandos after terrorists on the cruise ship Achille Lauro. In his 1991 autobiography "Under Fire," while describing terrorist Abu Abbas, North wrote, "I used to wonder: how many dead Americans will it take before we do something?" One could look at the number of Americans Osama bin Laden is alleged to have killed before September 11 and ask the same question.

It gets worse, much worse. A more complete timeline listing crucial events both before and after the September 11th suicide attacks, which have been blamed on bin Laden, establishes CIA foreknowledge of them and strongly suggests that there was criminal complicity on the part of the U.S. government in their execution. It also makes clear that the events which have taken place since September 11th are based upon an agenda that has little to do with the attacks.

One wonders how these events could have been ignored by the major media or treated as isolated incidents. Failing that, how could skilled news agencies avoid being outraged, or at least even just a little suspicious?

1998 and 2000 - Former President George H.W. Bush travels to Saudi Arabia on behalf of

the privately owned Carlyle Group, the 11th largest defense contractor in the U.S. While there he meets privately with the Saudi royal family and the bin Laden family. [Source: Wall Street Journal, Sept. 27, 2001. See also FTW, Vol. IV, No 7 - "The Best Enemies Money Can Buy," - http://www.copvcia.com/members/carlyle.html.]

Feb 13, 2001 - UPI Terrorism Correspondent Richard Sale – while covering a trial of bin Laden's Al Q'aeda followers - reports that the National Security Agency has broken bin Laden's encrypted communications. Even if this indicates that bin Laden changed systems in February it does not mesh with the fact that the government insists that the attacks had been planned for years.

May 2001 - Secretary of State Colin Powell gives $43 million in aid to the Taliban regime, purportedly to assist hungry farmers who are starving since the destruction of their opium crop in January on orders of the Taliban regime. [Source: The Los Angeles Times, May 22, 2001].

May, 2001 - Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, a career covert operative and former Navy Seal, travels to India on a publicized tour while CIA Director George Tenet makes a quiet visit to Pakistan to meet with Pakistani leader General Pervez Musharraf. Armitage has long and deep Pakistani intelligence connections and he is the recipient of the highest civil decoration awarded by Pakistan. It would be reasonable to assume that while in Islamabad, Tenet, in what was described as "an unusually long meeting," also met with his Pakistani counterpart, Lt. General Mahmud Ahmad, head of the ISI. [Source The Indian SAPRA news agency, May 22, 2001.]

July, 2001 - Three American officials: Tom Simmons (former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan), Karl Inderfurth (former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian affairs) and Lee Coldren (former State Department expert on South Asia), meet with Taliban representatives in Berlin and tell them that the U.S. is planning military strikes against Afghanistan in October. Also present are Russian and German intelligence officers who confirm the threat. [Source: The Guardian, September 22, 2001; the BBC, September 18, 2001.]

Summer 2001 - According to a Sept. 26 story in Britain's The Guardian, correspondent David Leigh reported that, "U.S. department of defense official, Dr. Jeffrey Starr, visited Tajikistan in January. The Guardian's Felicity Lawrence established that US Rangers were also training special troops in Kyrgyzstan. There were unconfirmed reports that Tajik and Uzbek special troops were training in Alaska and Montana." Summer 2001 (est.) - Pakistani ISI Chief General Mahmud (see above) orders an aide to wire transfer $100,000 to Mohammed Atta, who was according to the FBI, the lead terrorist in the suicide hijackings. Mahmud recently resigned after the transfer was disclosed in India and confirmed by the FBI. [Source: The Times of India, October 11, 2001.]

June 2001 - German intelligence, the BND, warns the CIA and Israel that Middle Eastern terrorists are "planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important

symbols of American and Israeli culture." [Source: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, September 14, 2001.]

Summer 2001 - An Iranian man phones U.S. law enforcement to warn of an imminent attack on the World Trade Center in the week of September 9th. German police confirm the calls but state that the U.S. Secret Service would not reveal any further information. [Source: German news agency "online.ie", September 14, 2001.]

August 2001 - The FBI arrests an Islamic militant linked to bin Laden in Boston. French intelligence sources confirm that the man is a key member of bin Laden's network and the FBI learns that he has been taking flying lessons. At the time of his arrest the man is in possession of technical information on Boeing aircraft and flight manuals. [Source: Reuters, September 13.]

Summer 2001 - Russian intelligence notifies the CIA that 25 terrorist pilots have been specifically training for suicide missions. This is reported in the Russian press and news stories are translated for FTW by a retired CIA officer.

July 4-14, 2001 - Osama bin Laden receives treatments for kidney disease at the American hospital in Dubai and meets with a CIA official who returns to CIA headquarters on July 15th. [Source: Le Figaro, October 31st, 2001.]

August 2001 - Russian President Vladimir Putin orders Russian intelligence to warn the U.S. government "in the strongest possible terms" of imminent attacks on airports and government buildings. [Source: MS-NBC interview with Putin, September 15.]

August/September, 2001 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average drops nearly 900 points in the three weeks prior to the attack. A major stock market crash is imminent.

Sept. 3-10, 2001 - MS-NBC reports on September 16 that a caller to a Cayman Islands radio talk show gave several warnings of an imminent attack on the U.S. by bin Laden in the week prior to 9/11.

September 1-10, 2001 - 25,000 British troops and the largest British Armada since the Falkland Islands War, part of Operation "Essential Harvest," are pre-positioned in Oman, the closest point on the Arabian Peninsula to Pakistan. At the same time two U.S. carrier battle groups arrive on station in the Gulf of Arabia just off the Pakistani coast. Also at the same time, some 17,000 U.S. troops join more than 23,000 NATO troops in Egypt for Operation "Bright Star." All of these forces are in place before the first plane hits the World Trade Center. [Sources: The Guardian, CNN, FOX, The Observer, International Law Professor Francis Boyle, the University of Illinois.]

September 6-7, 2001 - 4,744 put options (a speculation that the stock will go down) are purchased on United Air Lines stock as opposed to only 396 call options (speculation that the stock will go up). This is a dramatic and abnormal increase in sales of put options.

Many of the UAL puts are purchased through Deutschebank/AB Brown, a firm managed until 1998 by the current Executive Director of the CIA, A.B. "Buzzy" Krongard. [Source: The Herzliyya International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism, http://www.ict.org.il/, September 21; The New York Times; The Wall Street Journal.]

September 10, 2001 - 4,516 put options are purchased on American Airlines as compared to 748 call options. [Source: ICT - above] September 6-11, 2001 - No other airlines show any similar trading patterns to those experienced by UAL and American. The put option purchases on both airlines were 600% above normal. This at a time when Reuters (September 10) issues a business report stating, "Airline stocks may be poised to take off."

September 6-10, 2001 - Highly abnormal levels of put options are purchased in Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, AXA Re(insurance) which owns 25% of American Airlines, and Munich Re. All of these companies are directly impacted by the September 11 attacks. [Source: ICT, above; FTW, Vol. IV, No.7, October 18, 2001, http://www.copvcia.com/members/oct152001.html.]

It has been documented that the CIA, the Israeli Mossad and many other intelligence agencies monitor stock trading in real time using highly advanced programs reported to be descended from Promis software. This is to alert national intelligence services of just such kinds of attacks.

Promis was reported, as recently as June, 2001 to be in Osama bin Laden's possession and, as a result of recent stories by FOX, both the FBI and the Justice Department have confirmed its use for U.S. intelligence gathering through at least this summer.

This would confirm that CIA had additional advance warning of imminent attacks. [Sources: The Washington Times, June 15, 2001; FOX News, October 16, 2001; FTW, October 26, 2001, -http://www.copvcia.com/members/magic_carpet.html; FTW, Vol. IV, No.6, Sept. 18, 2001 - http://www.copvcia.com/members/sept1801.html; FTW, Vol. 3, No 7, 9/30/00 - www.copvcia.com/stories/may_2001/052401_promis.html.

September 11, 2001 - Gen Mahmud of the ISI (see above), friend of Mohammed Atta, is visiting Washington on behalf of the Taliban. [Source: MS-NBC, Oct. 7.]

September 11, 2001, For 35 minutes, from 8:15 AM until 9:05 AM, with it widely known within the FAA and the military that four planes have been simultaneously hijacked and taken off course, no one notifies the President of the United States.

It is not until 9:30 that any Air Force planes are scrambled to intercept, but by then it is too late. This means that the National Command Authority waited for 75 minutes before scrambling aircraft, even though it was known that four simultaneous hijackings had occurred - an event that has never happened in history. [Sources: CNN, ABC, MS-NBC, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times.]

September 13, 2001 - China is admitted to the World Trade Organization quickly, after 15 years of unsuccessful attempts. [Source: The New York Times, Sept. 30, 2001.]

September 15, 2001 - The New York Times reports that Mayo Shattuck III has resigned, effective immediately, as head of the Alex (A.B) Brown unit of Deutschebank.

September 29, 2001 - The San Francisco Chronicle reports that $2.5 million in put options on American Airlines and United Airlines are unclaimed. This is likely the result of the suspension in trading on the NYSE after the attacks which gave the Securities and Exchange Commission time to be waiting when the owners showed up to redeem their put options.

October 10, 2001 - The Pakistani newspaper The Frontier Post reports that U.S. Ambassador Wendy Chamberlain has paid a call on the Pakistani oil minister. A previously abandoned Unocal pipeline from Turkmenistan, across Afghanistan, to the Pakistani coast, for the purpose of selling oil and gas to China, is now back on the table "in view of recent geopolitical developments."

Mid October, 2001 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average, after having suffered a precipitous drop has recovered most of its pre-attack losses. Although still weak, and vulnerable to negative earnings reports, a crash has been averted by a massive infusion of government spending on defense programs, subsidies for "affected" industries and planned tax cuts for corporations.

Now, let's go back to the October 31 story by Le Figaro - the one that has Osama bin Laden meeting with a CIA officer in Dubai this June.

The story says that, "Throughout his stay in the hospital, Osama Bin Laden received visits from many family members [There goes the story that he's a black sheep!] and Saudi Arabian Emirate personalities of status. During this time the local representative of the CIA was seen by many people taking the elevator and going to bin Laden's room.

"Several days later the CIA officer bragged to his friends about having visited the Saudi millionaire. From authoritative sources, this CIA agent visited CIA headquarters on July 15tth, the day after bin Laden's departure for Quetta.

"According to various Arab diplomatic sources and French intelligence itself, precise information was communicated to the CIA concerning terrorist attacks aimed at American interests in the world, including its own territory.".

"Extremely bothered, they [American intelligence officers in a meeting with French intelligence officers] requested from their French peers exact details about the Algerian activists [connected to bin Laden through Dubai banking institutions], without explaining the exact nature of their inquiry. When asked the question, "What do you fear in the coming days?' the Americans responded with incomprehensible silence.".

"On further investigation, the FBI discovered certain plans that had been put together between the CIA and its "Islamic friends" over the years. The meeting in Dubai is, so it would seem, consistent with `a certain American policy.'"

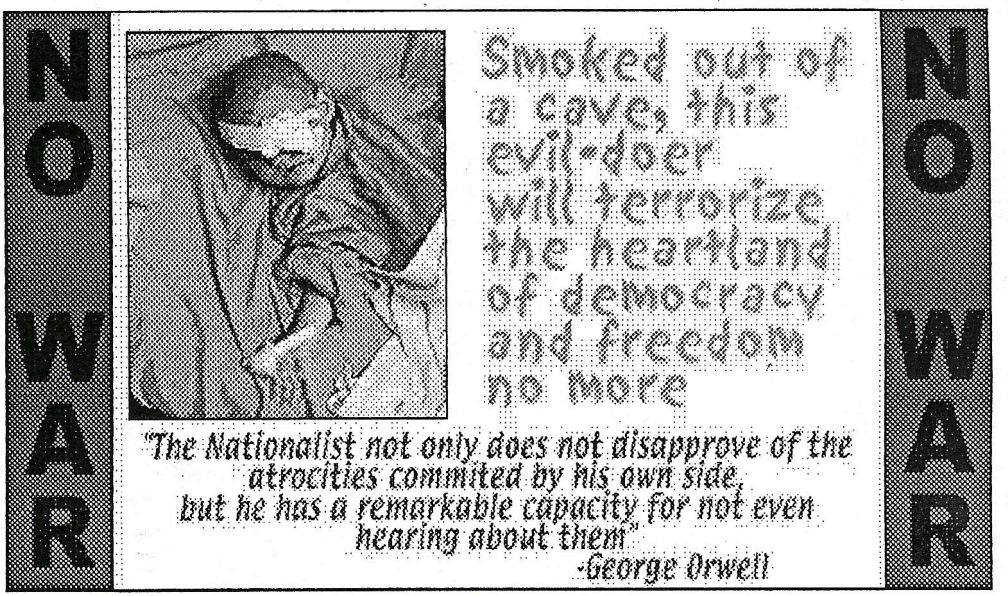
Even though Le Figaro reported that it had confirmed with hospital staff that bin Laden had been there as reported, stories printed on November 1 contained quotes from hospital staff that these reports were untrue. On November 1, as reported by the Ananova press agency, the CIA flatly denied that any meeting between any CIA personnel and Osama bin Laden at any time.

In the most ironic twist of all, FTW has learned that Le Figaro is owned by the Carlyle Group, the American defense contractor which employs George Bush Sr., and which had as investors - until they sold their stake on October 26 - the bin Laden family.

Who do you believe? In coming stories FTW will prove to you that this war, which according to Dick Cheney, may not end in our lifetimes, has been in the works for at least four years.

Mike Ruppert

http://copvcia.com


NO WAR
Smoked out of a cave, this evil-doer will terrorize the heartland of democracy and freedom no more
"The Nationalist not only does not disapprove of the atrocities commited by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them"
-George Orwell
NO WAR

NEW ASIO POWERS THREATEN CIVIL LIBERTIES

* ASIO to get powers of arrest and detention for up to 48 hours
* the removal of the right to silence when under questioning
* the creation of terrorist offences and related legislation violating the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

In the understandable fear generated since the September 11 attacks and withthe climate of war, fundamental civil liberties are under threat. The Federal Government, backed by Labor, has announced substantial new powers for Australia's spy agency ASIO and is proposing anti-terrorism laws that could violate basic rights and freedoms. While the precise proposals remain sketchy the Prime Minister has said ASIO will be able to arrest and hold people for questioning for 48 hours after obtaining a warrant from a Federal Magistrate. Even more concerning is the Attorney General's statement that people arrested could face up to five years in jail for refusing to answer questions, removing people's right to silence.

Early next year, legislation will be introduced based on the UK Terrorism Act 2000. This act allows the government to ban organisations and makes it an offence to be a member, attend a meeting, provide any support, indeed even wear t-shirt with the organisation's symbol. As one critic has said, support for Nelson Mandela's ANC would have been banned if these laws had been in place during the time of the anti-apartheid movement. In Australia, support for the East Timorese's independence movement could have been banned. But the laws scope is not just restricted to solidarity with overseas independence groups. The definition of terrorism is so broad that many community organisations involved in organising public protest or dissent cold be included.

If Australia adopts the European model, the scope could be even wider. The European Parliament is currently discussing new laws which would define terrorism as any offences which "aim to seriously prejudice the political,

economic or social structures of a country." Such a definition might include anyone arrested at protest about the environment, corporate globalisation, native title, or asylum seekers. The existing criminal law is adequate to address any offences which fall within any common sense definition of terrorism. Murder, serious injury, aiding and abetting or conspiracy are all charges available to police, with serious penalties attached. The danger of these proposals is that many of the protections and principals of the criminal law will be done away with broad powers placed in the hands of an unaccountable and secret police.

ACT NOW Protest, organise, take action

* circulate this information and tell your family, friends and workmates
* write to the media about these dangerous proposals
* write to politicians informing them of your concerns and opposition to the proposals

contact illawarranowar@yahoogroups.com

no one is illegal
HOWARD
+ BEAZLEY
= WAR
No War
Peace
NO WAR
NO RACISM
Peace and global justice

NO WAR
NO
RACISM

Secret Sailor Books

This is the story of a place in Bloomington, Indiana, back in the states. It's a community centre, it's a bookstore, it's a punk and folk venue, it's a meeting hall, and it's a home among other things. The name comes from an old phrase and a new tattoo or two. The phrase, "no secrets between sailors," was a part of the great mysticism aligned to pirates in Indiana. Its important to understand that Indiana is landlocked. The only sailing is over a "sea of soybeans and oceans of corn." Yet there is a strong love of the highwayman, the criminal as saint. Dreaming of John Dillinger, our own Pretty Boy Floyd.

Yet, as part of Forth of July celebrations this year the bookstore put a float in the parade. They built a rolling pirate ship, put out a call to all land lovers with dreams of treachery and revenge, and swarmed across the town with over a hundred eye patch and hook clad rebels casting the MCs out of the grandstand and taking over the Republican Party Office in town. Part of a two week celebration put on by the Sailor to celebrate a bit of independence we're all told we have but have yet to really hold.

The new tattoos are many. But first there was Jared who has a pink anchor on his belly. Later there were others.

The back room was originally set up to have a printing press, but the printer was also a hobo, selling his art as he rides the rails to take care of the meals and we all knew he'd never stay in town long enough for a single thing to be printed. And he wasn't. A year later when he returned, the back room had been turned into the headquarters for Midwest Pages to Prisoners. The Sailor takes in donated books and mails them off to prisoners.

Anarchists, Socialists, Earth First!, ABC, Food not bombs, a knitting club, a street theatre troupe among others meet there. There is an area set aside with toys and puzzles, stuffed animals and a crib for when the little ones come along. The shelves are filled with a wide range of books, pamphlets, newsletters, zines, records and CDs, and other things people bring in.

One night a week there is a store meeting, anyone in the collective can come. And if your not in the collective, that's the time to come and join in. Sometimes there are five, and sometimes twenty or more, mostly determined by what is discussed.

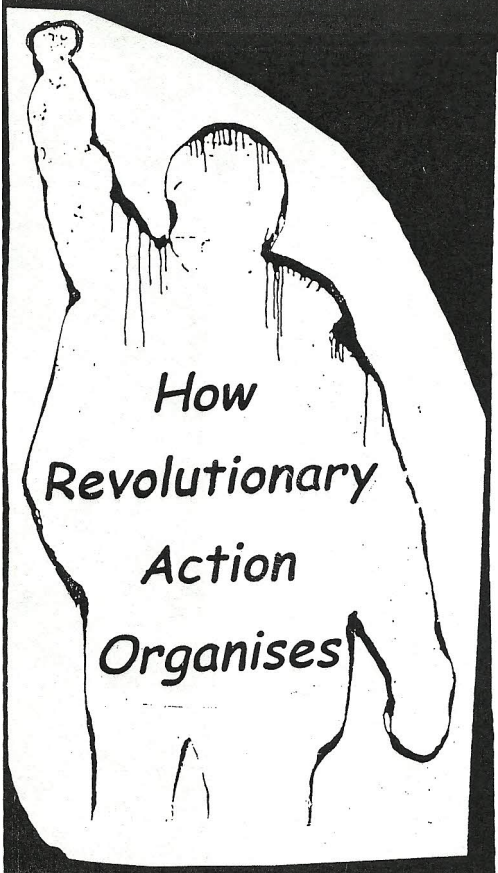
Our front there are two large bay windows used for displays. People take turns setting up displays. Sometimes the display is just stands with new books, others have included potted plants in homemade pots, paintings or writings put up, if its your turn then its your turn.

I was at the sailor from almost the very beginning. Its origins are comical and sad, inspiring and uplifting. Sam started it up because he needed to get a job, and he figured, if he had to work, it might as well be somewhere he wanted to work. So he got a collective together and everyone got to it. There are people who are at the Sailor everyday, and some only now and again. Some helped build the place, but never run a shift, others run every shift they can and never come to a meeting for any longer than it takes to say 'hello.' Everyone does what they want, what they feel is good to

contribute. Which means there has been tough times. When the snow melts and the flowers push up out of the ground you can sit at the front counter and hear the rattle and roar of the Indiana Line freight trains coming in from Martinsville just two blocks away. There have been weeks where I was alone, everyone else was hitching or hopping, just finding a way to get out of town. Or once its truly summer and the water is warm enough, come four o'clock Sarah would come in each day and call for a troupe to join her in a swim at Lake Griffy, or more likely a trip to one of the limestone quarries which define Bloomington so well. Theoretically the Sailor was open til eight, but on those nights we were lucky to be open til seven. A swim after such a hot humid day can't be beat.

When I think of a social centre I think of the sailor. Before Seattle and Washington we had trainings and meetings. Movie nights and punk shows. I remember so many things about the Sailor, but ultimately it's community. That's why, sometimes the first thing I think about when I think about the sailor is the late night bike rides we'd take to get out of town and look at the stars and sometimes it's the heated debates going late into the night on the couches by the door. I miss people and wonder how they are and I miss the shelves and the excitement of opening a new order. And I cherish the fact that such places exist and I use those memories as a driving force for so much of what I do.

Matt



In Revolutionary Action we continually discuss and debate issues of power, democracy, freedom and liberation. In relation to this we have spent a fair amount of time discussing our platform and rules document. Initially we spent a few months putting it together ans since forming RA we have had three discussion days on the document. We regard the platform and rules as a living document which will continue to evolve as we do. We see the document as an outline of our shared ideas and practices on the key issues of power relations, democracy and revolutionary change. Yet, we continually discuss and debate these issues, while encouraging people to decide for themselves what they should do and how they should do it The platforms purpose is to help create common ground to work from, under the belief that frank and open political debate within the collective will help decide tactical and political questions as they arise.

We do not aim to reduce our ideas to a lowest common denominator with which everyone can agree, but instead aim to recognise and support the autonomy of each individual, a recognition which embraces the actual conflicts that exist between people. We wish to develop collective action involving a coinciding of affinities between people who insist on making their lives their own, a genuine unity between insurgent individuals which lasts only as long as they desire. We attempt to base our activity entirely on the needs of the working class and try to help foster the self-initiative and self-action of our class. We try to participate wherever possible in any action of the working class, not by proposing the adoption of our programme, but by endeavouring to increase the direct participation of the class, in all decisions that affect them.

Members and supporters can attend meetings or other activities when they wish, they can take part in discussions and debates, publish their views in our journal or post on the RA list or they can choose not to, it's up to them. Democratic power within RA is based on involvement, on action, not on perceptions of who is the most knowledgable, committed or experienced. It is important to know who are those willing to take some organisational responsibility. Yet, we try not to exclude non-members from taking on organisational tasks. RA supporters and members carry out different roles and functions which occur spontaneously or are delegated by collective meetings.

We do not expect or require RA members to make RA the "axis of their lives", although this may happen. As RA member, Dave Eden, explains "Revolutionary Action is not a special or unique space but is different from others due to the basis it is concieved around. RA does not play some unique role, the way that a Leninist would concieve the party playing or an anarcho-syndaclist a union. In our lives we have many political 'spaces' that are formed, collapse and maybe form again around us: some of these are explicit (collectives, unions, squats etc.) some not so (friendships, dinner parties, gigs etc.). RA is just one of them. What seperates it is that it is formed on a explictialy revolutionary basis. It only works because it's members and supporters are invloved in numerous relationships, stuggles, debates, discussions etc. that make up working class life. The borders of this political space called RA are greater than the membership. We are a formation through which a small section of the class attempts to take control of their lives."

We see the collective as supporting and developing democratic practice within RA based on our rules. The rules are based on the decisions made at collective meetings. Non-members have speaking rights and we try to include them in all debates, discussions and decisions. It is only when we have a vote that non-members are not included in the decision making process. We always try to reach consensus on issues, but if that is not possible, we have a vote. In order to further develop democracy and people's autonomy, we recognise and defend the right of minority positions to become the majority through open debate and activity within our organisation,

current political movements and publicly. All decisions of the collective can be publicly disagreed with, openly challenged by individual members or factions formed where a group of members disagree with the majority. The collective also has a commitment to publish dissenting views. When RA members speak publicly (whether as an RA speaker at a forum or at home with their friends) they are at liberty to put forward their own views and analysis.

Autonomy involves freedom, self determination and choice. RA comrades try to ensure that minority and individual rights are not overridden by majority rights. RA combines consensus and majority decision making and the right to dissent Those in the minority have the right to publicly oppose the majority decision and have the freedom not to conform with it. Thus we combine the freedom of the collective to make decisions through consensus or majority decision making and the freedom of individuals or minorities to dissent throughout the process. We believe that individual and minority rights need to be protected and extended. That the right of minorities to dissent should be respected and people should have equal rights to share in determining the rules and policies under which they live. That democratic rights need to be guaranteed to individuals and exercised collectively and that these rights need to be underpinned by a solid conception of personal autonomy as well as the equal autonomy of others. That they need to recognise both the autonomy of the individual person and the interconnectedness of their life with others.

Revolutionary Action Platform and Rules

Greetings Comrades, What you are about to read is the program of Revolutionary Action, a collective of (surprise, surprise) revolutionaries. Revolutionary Action believes that not one faction or tendency amongst the international revolutionary movement has a monopoly on the "truth" for the way forward. We wish to create an organisation where individuals whether they call themselves anarchists, socialists, communists or whatever can come together to fight against capitalism. Within the boundaries that the collective explicitly believes, that the way to create a better world is through revolutionary workers' self-liberation, the greatest amount of pluralism and debate is encouraged. People familiar with the left will notice the brevity of the document. Many left organisations define their positions in huge text books where every I is dotted and every T crossed twice. This brevity does not arise because we are just lazy and could not be bothered writing a thesis on Revolutionary Action's exact position, but more that we do not seek an exact position. The programs purpose is to create a common ground to work from, with the belief that frank open political debate within the collective will decide tactical and political questions as they arise. (Insert inspiring slogan here)

Aims

The collective aims to contribute to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a society free from all forms of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence.

Methods

1) The creation of the broadest possible solidarity within the working class and the promotion of debate around questions of organisation and revolutionary strategy.

2) To participate in and build movements that fight against the misery of capitalism on everyday issues affecting the working class. Within these movements the collective argues for internal democracy and militant class politics. For not only are these tactics necessary to win concessions from capital, it is through this process of struggle that the working class is united.

Platform

1) Capitalism is a society based on the exploitation of the working class. The working class makes up the vast majority of society; consisting of everyone who must sell their labour-power to live.

2) The revolutionary working class movement is built through everyday struggles against capitalist society and the power of the ruling class.

3) The struggle against capitalism leads to the development of democratic bodies of working class power; strike committees, community organisations and workers' councils. These forms of organisation will be the basis of the revolution and the society it creates.

4) The working class must free itself through it's own collective action. Liberation will not come through parliament but through working class revolution.

5) The revolution must be an act of the workers themselves and not some minority on their behalf. It must be pluralistic, multi-party and based on active, participatory and unlimited democracy.

6) Revolutionary groups and individuals are part of the working class movement and not leaders separate from and superior to it.

7) Capitalism is inherently racist, sexist and homophobic. It uses discrimination to divide the working class and subject sections of the class (i.e. women and ethnic minorities) to a situation of extra-exploitation and oppression. The liberation struggles against this are integral parts of the revolution.

8) Capitalism threatens the world with complete environmental destruction in it's constant search for profits. This destruction will only end with the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a society based not on greed, but democratically decided needs and wants.

9) The capitalist system is international and so is the exploitation of the working class. Nationalism is a tool to divide the working class and make them sympathise with their exploiters. Global solidarity is needed everywhere so that there can be freedom anywhere.

Rules and principles

1) Membership of Revolutionary Action is open to all who agree with the rules and principles and are accepted by a vote of the collective.

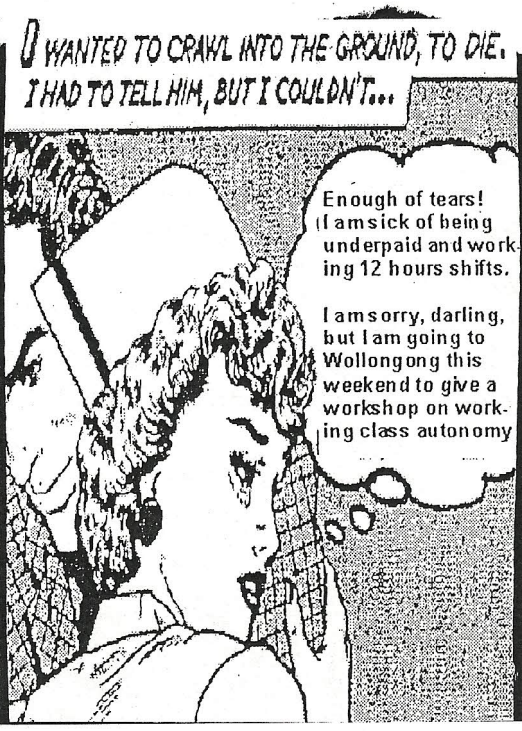
2) Collective meetings are open to all, however only members have voting rights.

3) A vote of the collective is a simple majority vote at a meeting of the collective.

4)The collective will not run tickets in union elections.

5) Members may be elected to administrative positions but these are instantly recallable and without privilege.

6) All members have the right to form factions. Such factions may publish their views both within the collective and in public and in the case of minority factions the collective has a responsibility to assist them in publishing their views.


I WANTED TO CRAWL INTO THE GROUND, TO DIE. I HAD TO TELL HIM, BUT I COULDN'T...
Enough of tears! I am sick of being underpaid and working 12 hours shifts.
I am sorry, darling, but I am going to Wollongong this weekend to give a workshop on working class autonomy

How to VOTE?

	Why?
CURTIS, John	Because if you don't vote today you will be fined $55.
PINK, J Edwin	Because you need to feel like you are having a say and can make a difference.
FIELDS, Jeremy	Because you need to delude yourself into thinking you live in a democracy.
BERRY, Carol	Because these politicians are working hard for you, and this is your way of saying thankyou! *snicker*
MOTT, Trevor	Because if you dont go through the motions of having to vote for one or the other pro-business, pro-capitalist party you might have to otherwise have a real say in running your own affairs.
MARTIN, Stephen	Because in our parliamentary system the most democracy you ever get to exercise is the walk to the polling booth.
NEWMAN, Michael	Because they need us to pretend to legitimise their actions, their pay, their perks and their lies.
SKINNER, Paul	Because if you don't number a box today they cannot pretend that you have had a choice in how they hand over your money and assets to some business buddy in some shoddy backroom deal.

- WHAT KIND OF CHOICE IS THIS !?! -

Parliamentary Rule is Not a Real Democracy.
No matter who gets in, big business is protected.
So vote for anyone, because you know that they are all just lying anyway.
REAL Democracy is how you live your life.
Don't be fooled into thinking that this is what democracy is about.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY - NOT PARLIAMENTARY RULE

more info - PTO --->

DIRECT DEMOCRACY!
NOT PARLIAMENTARY RULE.

Direct democracy is different to parliamentary democracy in a number of important ways:

1.Direct democracy is about 'originating' ideas as much as it is about 'approving' them. In parliamentary democracy, people are never asked for their own ideas - they are only asked to 'approve' or 'disapprove' of ideas already prepared for them. Direct democracy is radically different in that way. Direct democracy is based on the realistic notion that 'people know best how to look after their own situation'. We don't need specialists to tell us how to run our places of work or our communities. Anarchists argue that we are quite capable of doing this ourselves. All we need are the resources and the right to do this. Direct democracy is the method.

2.Direct democracy is based on delegation not representation. The crucial difference between delegation and representation is that delegates are only elected to implement specific decisions. Delegates do not have the right (like MPs) to change a decision previously made by an assembly of people. Delegates (unlike representatives) can be immediately recalled and dismissed from their mandate if they don't carry out the specific function allotted to them.

3.Direct democracy is as much about the workplace as it is about the community. In parliamentary democracy, the workplace is 'immune' to democracy (save what rights workers have won through their unions). In direct democracy, the operation of a factory or a plant or an office will be via a general assembly of all workers. This body will decide on conditions of work, will elect re-callable managers, and will organise how work is done. It will also elect people (as delegates) who will co-ordinate with the other places of work and with the broader community. Regional organisation will be managed through a federation of workplaces using a delegate structure.

From: http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/once/pd_chap9.html
More info: http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/secJ2.html

True democracy cannot exist unless it is a) localized, with each community receiving the autonomy to make the decisions that affect their livelihood, b) pervasive, so that the vote is carried into every part of society, whether organization, production, education, etc., c) participatory, such that nobody is excluded from proposing ideas, modifications, or a repeal of what already exists, d) egalitarian, where no person is given greater weight over another, e) tolerant of dissent and disagreement, both of which are necessary for a healthy society, and f) when representatives are necessary, those representatives can be immediately recalled and replaced if they do not represent the will of those they represent.

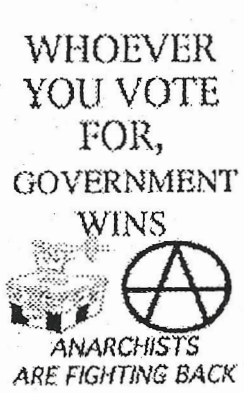
http://www.infoshop.org/texts/chisari_voting.html

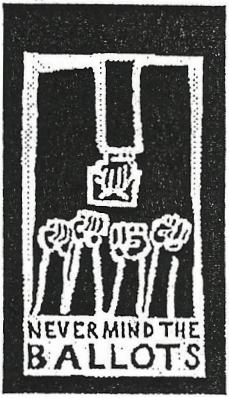
We are not saying "Don't Vote". Whether we vote or not, or who we vote for, is largely unimportant. What is important is realising that it is not a cross on a piece of paper which counts, but how we spend the rest of our lives. Real change comes about not because we vote for it, but because we fight for it, shout for it, work for it. Placing hopes and fears on who holds power, or who will gain power through voting, is wasting time which might be spent in creating alternatives, both for ourselves and for our communities. Whether you choose to vote or not does not interest us.
But we ask you: Organise! Educate! Participate!
- Chumbawamba Statement - 1987

are required only by Windows-based programs.

Voting disempowers the grassroots

Instead of people putting energy into directly working for local and global change, voting diverts and co-opts people power. Rather than "do something together" people vote to try and get politicians to do something for them. Real change doesn't happen through the ballot box. It happens when ordinary people work together to make a difference.





Voting reinforces state power

Although voting gives the impression that the government does (or can) serve the people, once in power politicians use state power to protect and expand their own prestige and privilege. Elections have depoliticised the public. As Brian Martin writes, historically as suffrage has expanded, "the degree of resistance to taxation, military service and the immense variety of laws that regulate behaviour, has been greatly attenuated." Because the state is part of the problem, Martin continues, "namely being a prime factor in war, genocide, repression, economic inequality, male domination and environmental destruction ... it is foolish to expect that these problems can be overcome by electing a few nominal leaders of the state." (Martin, 'Democracy without elections' in Social Alternatives 1990, pp14-15)

Revolutionary Change

Merely tinkering with the system cannot solve the multi-faceted crisis we are now experiencing. Activists and people of conscience need to examine the sources of power contributing to this crisis and find ways of systematically withdrawing their consent and cooperation. This then becomes a powerful basis from which to support visions for a more peaceful, just and ecologically sane world. The state, in spite of the little good it does, is one of the major causes of oppression. "The state" Gandhi once said, "represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."

"The difference between a Coalition and Labor Government is similar to the difference between Pepsi and Coke, i.e. more to do with perceptions of the consumer than the distinct attributes of the product"
Andrew Pease, J.P. Morgan economist.

Are you tired of holding your nose and voting for the least repulsive candidate? Well so are we! The differences between the political parties are relatively superficial. They will set an agenda that reinforces the current power structure, while the broader issues of how we live will never be addressed. They just propose a series of differing bribes yet agree on all the major issues.

It doesn't matter who you vote for, the government always gets in -- the government being big business, and those who can afford to fund political parties or hire lobbyists. The elected party is just the changeable mask on the face of corporate power.

Voting in this election is not only useless, it actually undermines democracy by giving legitimacy to prevailing power structures which are inherently undemocratic. Being guilt-tripped into voting for the least offensive party ain't democratic. So don't delude yourself into thinking these elections is where it is all at....
Voting is really an insignificant act compared to the greater goal of creating authentic democracy. We need to participate in forging real communities through everyday acts of resistance and community building. A vote every couple of years is not democracy, it's repressive. Get over it.

It is true that voting should not be taken lightly or for granted, but the struggle for democracy should not end once we are given the vote. We need more than the illusion of democracy. We need to continue our resistance and defiance so that we all have power.

Certainly whilst representative democracy is far better than political tyranny, it is far from the ideal and has strayed a long way from any kind of participatory or radical roots. Surely many people would agree when we say that the politicians we have to choose from are not a good choice, nor would we trust them or even believe what they say or agree that they have our own interests at heart. Instead we feel that it is time to advocate an alternative system, a system of Direct and Participatory Democracy that does away with professional politicians who merely use our vote as a rubber stamp to "mandate" their actions.

Elections don't work
In the context of representative parliamentary democracy elections don't work. They may have worked once when a smaller scale made participation and accountability possible, but they don't work now. Voting in either State or Federal elections doesn't present any serious challenge to the prevailing power system. Voting challenges neither, private property, distribution of wealth, state monopoly over 'legitimate' violence, male domination or any other range of societal relations that affect our lives.. Voting does not affect the decisions of your boss, your workplace nor your daily activities. Token participation by voting every three or so years, amounts to choosing the faces of those who make the decisions rather than genuine participation in the decision-making process itself.

Patents and Pillaging

The direct control and manipulation of information (and disinformation) has always been crucial to the maintenance and expansion of ruling class power structures in any given capitalist, imperial, or religion based society. As we enter the 21st century, an era of both genetic patents and instant global communication, it is important to examine worldwide information structures and how commercial forces try to make your knowledge theirs.

The global distribution of knowledge, when examined using a variety of indicators such as enrolment in educational institutions and ownership of patents, is strongly biased towards industrialised nations, and the gap is increasing. In the 1980s, developing countries accounted for 6% of R&D investments, falling to 4% in the 1990's. Industrial countries hold 97% of patents worldwide, and 80% of patents granted in developing countries belong to residents of industrial countries. Of course, these figures only relate to knowledge essential to modern industrial societies, and not to local knowledge, such as a traditional village's expertise in interacting with their local environment and resources.

However, local knowledge is under threat of being "claimed" as fields such as biotechnology advance and infringe on traditional information and skills. Legal systems of industrialised nations are set up to protect proprietary knowledge and merchant's rights, and take little if any notice of this local information. Knowledge about specific properties of plants, animals, and ecosystems that may be crucial to the survival of a particular society can be "discovered" by new research, and then quickly stamped and filed by the ever-present phalanx of patent lawyers, making the company that made the discovery the sole owner of that particular information, regardless of any other society that may have had the un-patented information for years.

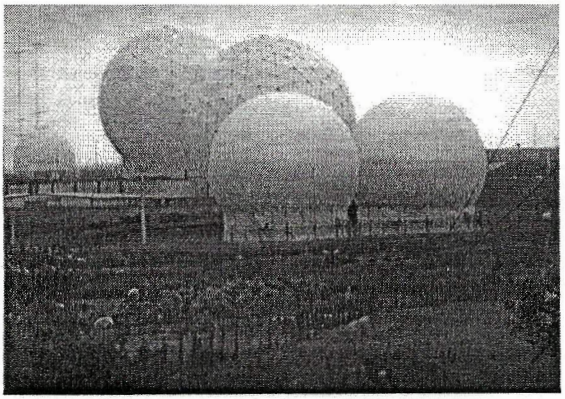
The World Trade Organisation's 1995 Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement pays little attention to indigenous knowledge, but impedes its independent production (through the need to protect anything new with expensive patents), as well as legitimizing its plunder (anything without an expensive patent is fair game). Importantly, there has been no documentary evidence of increased trade in knowledge goods or expanded foreign direct investment as a result of intellectual property rights or patenting. This is acceptable to the members of the WTO however, as they only wish to use and monopolise on knowledge rather than trade in it.

Another way commercial entities try to capitalise on information is by collection of data from groups, businesses, and individuals as they communicate and research on the internet, purchase goods by electronic means, or even talk on the telephone. Companies known as data-mining companies gather information such as age, sex, marital status, financial transactions, medical records, and anything else that they deem useful, and then sell this data to other companies, who usually use it for advertising and marketing trends, although

any profitable use is considered. The techniques of mining vary, but in general the data-miners take advantage of the "trusting internet user/consumer" who fills in website forms as asked, perhaps as part of a purchasing or membership sign-up routine, as well as examining "cookies", which are files stored locally on an internet user's hard disk, with each cookie documenting the user's usage pattern of a particular website. The increasing use of monitoring in call-centres, both of staff and trade related phone calls, results in another resource for data miners, as it is legal for the call-centre company to sell the data. As to what the government thinks of all this, they not only support data-miners, but have their own version in the form of spy networks.

The Australian government has introduced a Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Bill tabled in the House of Representatives on June 26, 2000. This was supported by the ALP, ensuring a quiet run through the senate for quick implementation. It gives data-miners legal authority to collect and sell the information mentioned above, and actively reduces the privacy of the individual while promoting the interests of big business. An example of a company benefiting from this is Telstra, who unless told otherwise will record the conversation of anyone ringing in for product support or general queries, and then use the data as they wish. Telstra is not subject to the privacy act, but only the telecommunications interception act, where if Telstra wanted to monitor an individual's phone calls for the purpose of crime solving, they would have to get a court order, and thus it is unclear how they use the data, as they are protected by the June 26 2000 bill, and not required to reveal what they do with it.

The Australian government is not new to data mining, admitting on Nine Network's Sunday program, on 23 May 1999,that it has been using the UKUSA Echelon spy network, which has been in operation for about 50 years. This was the first admission by any government that Echelon exists.



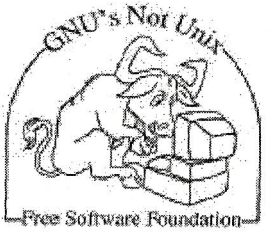
Australia's Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), runs the Australian operations. A spokesman has admitted that the DSD co-operates with counterpart signals intelligence organisations overseas under the UKUSA relationship. Given that Australia and New Zealand are junior partners in this network, which is dominated by the US National Security Agency (NSA), followed by Britain and Canada, this means more than co-operation. Because Australia and New Zealand are junior members of the UKUSA, they cannot turn down requests by the NSA, for example, for information concerning their businesses and citizens.

Established after WWII, the pact was aimed at helping the Western powers to check the spread of communism. Through the sharing of facilities, staff, strategies, tasks and products between the participating governments, this global network proved invaluable during the Cold War. Since the Cold War ended, this system has been developing into a formidable tool for gathering economic intelligence.

The UKUSA uses the Echelon system to simultaneously scan millions of messages every 30 minutes for key words that may be of interest to intelligence agencies and governments. Highly automated tracking stations illicitly pick up commercial communications and examine every fax, telex, e-mail, phone call, or computer data message that monitored satellites carry. Information is also fed into the Echelon system from the internet and by monitoring pods on undersea cables Intercepted signals are filtered through a computer system known as the "Dictionary". This compares each new message or call against thousands of collection requirements. The Dictionaries then send the messages into the spy agencies equivalent of the Internet ...and I'd say this article will be in there as I'm e-mailing it to get it printed and it mentions Echelon, government, and DSD several times).

One contrast to the activities of corporations and governments is the GNU General Public License (GPL), a license system set up by programmer Richard Stallman to protect his Emacs text editor in 1984. Stallman had written Emacs for his GNU operating system. An operating system is the base software package that your computer relies on to convert circuits into useful data structures, like Microsoft Windows 95/98/2000/etc. He based his system on Unix, which was, and still is, proven and established. Stallman named the system GNU, a recursive acronym for GNU's not Unix. He compiled existing free software and wrote the rest needed, planning to release the software to anyone who chose to use it. Emacs was the first project, and the GPL set up for its release.

The GPL was designed to protect and promote the freedom of the user, and the only restrictions involved with the licence are necessary to ensure that future users would have the same freedom available to them. The licence states that it is acceptable to distribute or modify the source code, the base code that makes up a program, or even sell it, but the source code must be distributed with the application, and any derived works must also be placed under the GPL.



The Linux operating system uses some GNU software, and is also under the GPL. Linux currently runs the majority of web servers on the internet, and is the fastest growing operating system in the world. Linux comes in many distributions, such as Debian, which is a system that remains completely free, meaning all contributed software is under GPL and programmers are volunteers. Linux also comes as corporate distributions, such as Corel Linux and the soon to be released Microsoft Linux (shudder), which have many software packages under standard corporate licences.

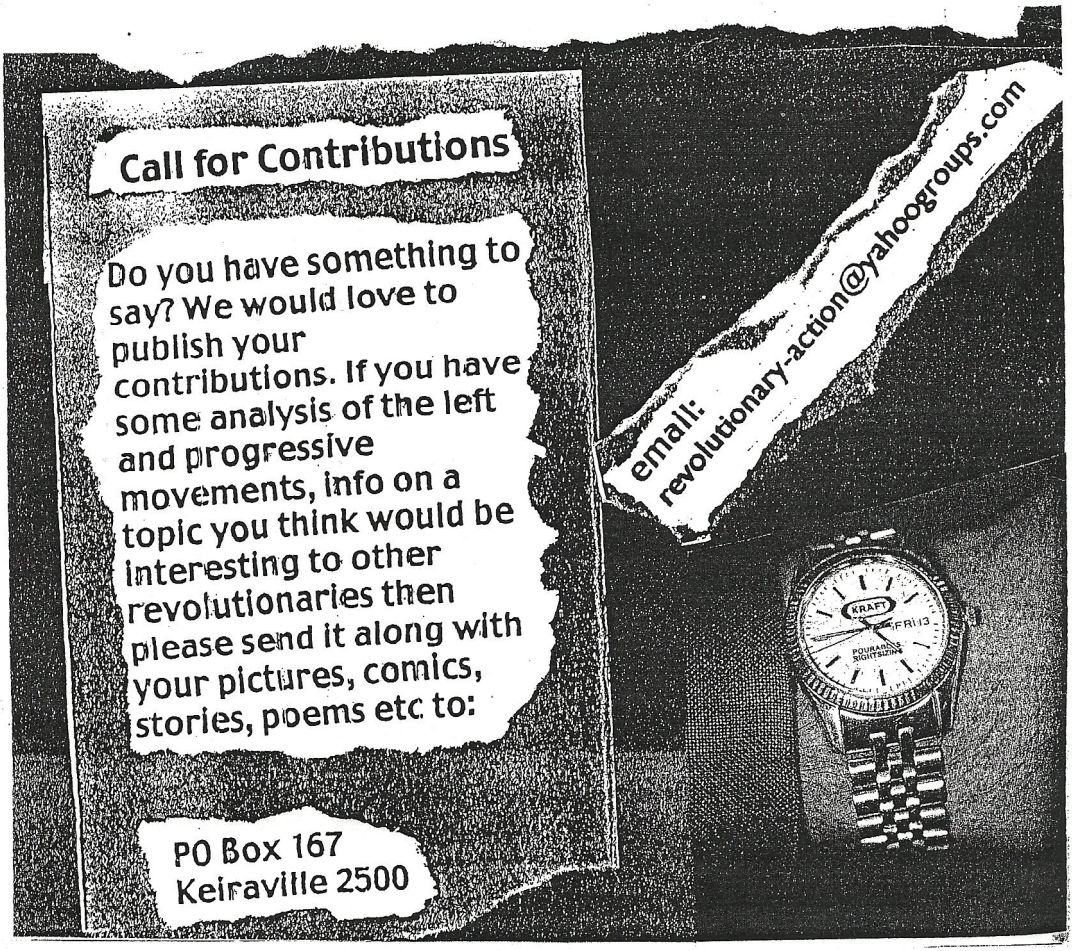
There are criticisms that can be made of Linux, that I'll probably save for another article, most likely called "criticisms of Linux" or something similar, but in general it's a good example of a public licensing system that's a working alternative to patents .

Scott

Articles plundered for data by the author:

Who has the right to know?, Cees J. Hamelink, Third World Resurgence No 129/130

O Big Brother, Where Art Thou?, Alan Griffiths, 27th January 01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Do you have something to say? We would love to publish your contributions. If you have some analysis of the left and progressive movements, info on a topic you think would be interesting to other revolutionaries then please send it along with your pictures, comics, stories, poems etc to:
PO Box 167
Keiraville 2500
email:
revolutionary-action@yahoogroups.com
KRAFT

Health and Revolution

Industrial medicine is seen by many people as one of the great achievements of capitalism, the one thing that we will want to hang on to after the revolution. However, rather than increasing public health on a broad scale capitalism produces medicines only for the wealthy who can afford them. Many of these medicines are dangerous concoctions of powerful chemicals, often little understood even by their manufacturers and the doctors who prescribe them. One of the largest growth areas in the pharmaceutical industry is psychiatric medications. These medications, themselves a part of the control mechanism of capitalism help suppress dissent and blame the individual for social problems. They are also very dangerous. The action of these drugs: the anti-psychotics, anti-depressants etc. on the brain is not well understood and even psychiatrists do not know how many of these drugs have the effects they do. All anti-psychotic medicines, for example, can cause a form of brain damage known as tardive dyskenesia which can put the sufferer in a wheelchair and causes tics and loss of motor control. They can often give the person taking them a crazed look which then adds to their social stigma and lends credence to labelling them mentally ill.

Is this kind of medicine a help to health or a hindrance? Psychiatric drugs are not the only danger of industrial medicine. The hospital system itself is a major danger to our health. Hospitals are full of infection and the overworked doctors, nurses and other staff such as cleaners and wardspersons are themselves a danger to patients as they are so stressed and tired. Nurses commonly work double shifts where they work the afternoon shift until 11pm and then return to work at 7am the next morning. It has been estimated that one in five deaths in Australia is the result of medical error, not exactly a gold star for modern industrial medicine.

We need a democratic way of involving people in looking after their own health. In the context of capitalism where medicine and other health 'services' are treated as commodities the alienation of people from their bodies means that people are generally

unable to look after themselves. This can be as simple as not eating properly, dressing inappropriately for cold and windy weather etc.

In the recent federal elections the ALP promised more money for hospitals. Politicians focus on one liners such as 'more money for hospitals' because they cannot solve the growing problems of chronic and acute disease within the boundaries of capitalism and a revolutionary anti-capitalist approach is needed. While hospitals are desperately under-funded, preventative measures are more effective than crisis care. I previously worked in the Accident and Emergency Department of Wollongong hospital and there I witnessed the huge array of potentially preventable problems which had reached crisis point. Drug overdoses and drink driving related accidents are but a small section of the problems dealt with in emergency that could have been dealt with much more easily elsewhere. These problems are related to the alienation that capitalism creates and reinforces. Many of us use drugs in an effort to overcome or escape the horrors of life under capitalism. Many people do not think there lives are worth very much as the capitalist machine reinforces the idea that we are just a source of labour power. This leads to risk taking behaviour that can be fatal. Capitalism and capitalist medicine simultaneously promote the fear of death and attempt to overcome death. With anti-aging creams and cosmetic surgery no one needs to grow old and die. Youth is everywhere associated with success and the idea that medicine can conquer death with expensive and heroic acts of surgery and emergency medicine reinforces the idea that death is controllable. This lack of acceptance of death also perpetuates problem as people feel that they can do what they like to their bodies without paying a price.

These problems are a result of the alienation that capitalism causes and as such can only be overcome by overcoming capitalism. While this sounds like 'after the revolution' rhetoric in fact on a personal level coming to grips with drug problems, stress etc. often entails a radical anti-capitalist struggle on the personal and social levels.

Alternative health practices such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and homeopathic medicine have been ridiculed and attacked by the medical establishment. Where they are accepted they are dressed up as another commodity for the consumer looking for something new. The medical profession are beginning to accept some aspects of alternative medicine but often they subvert them into the dominant medical paradigm. In one recent research programme a Chinese herb that has been used to treat fever is being researched by a major American drug company by extracting the 'active principle' and turning this into a medicine. This is at odds with the principles of TCM which usually advocates the use of the whole plant. This use of the whole plant has been found to be an effective way of preventing resistance to treatment but because this knowledge is not codified into the modern scientific method but is expounded using an alternative system it is not seen. as valid.

The fixation on 'active principles' is fundamental to capitalist medical orthodoxy. Western medicine is focussed on the virus or bacteria and looks for an agent that attacks that organism without looking at the wider cause of ill health. I think this is an important symbol for the way capitalism tries to dissect every aspect of our lives and destroy the interconnectedness of the universe. This may be seen as 'hippy ranting' but the effectiveness of using whole plants in herbal medicine is actually based on sound practice and does not lead to the development of resistant strains of viruses, bacteria etc.

It makes me extremely angry when western medicine is seen as one of the triumphs of capitalism. Like all other aspects of capitalist society medicine has to be understood within the power relationships of capitalist society. In hospitals 'patients' are pacified and controlled by confinement to bed even when this is not appropriate. Treatment is the province of powerful authoritarian specialist called 'doctors' who have a monopoly on knowledge of health and are beyond reproach. The reverential attitude towards doctors is beginning to change as more people question what their doctors tell them and take an active interest in their own health.

Capitalist medicine has no concept of what it is to be healthy, only technical descriptions of disease. This is not surprising as it is impossible to be fully healthy within capitalist society. The constant bombardment of chemicals poisons us, the alienation from the body means we have little idea of who we are or how we function and as a consequence we don't really know how our bodies feel when we subject them to the poisons capitalism happily sells us or to the cold and heat. We are so detached from nature that our bodies cannot function properly. The most fundamental problem with health under capitalism, however, is that we are alienated from ourselves. We fear death and disease, we are alienated even from our loved ones and us such we suffer angst over our existence.

A revolutionary democratic conception of health has to be based on people taking control of their bodies and their lives and this necessitates struggle against capitalism. I would like to give my health advise for revolutionaries: keep warm, stay away from drafts, especially air conditioning drafts. Protect the neck and the soles of the feet, these are entrance points for disease according to Chinese medicine. Take time out to relax, a stressed revolutionary is an unhealthy revolutionary and an unhealthy revolutionary can't make the revolution. Make love, loving sex is one of the best means of relaxation and regeneration of the body's energy.

Taking care of ourselves is intrinsically revolutionary and anti-capitalist as it challenges our role as workers in the capitalist machine and gives us value just for being ourselves. I think it is an essential part of the revolution of everyday life.

alexander brown

Making love and sexual liberation

Today, we are caught up in an economic and social system in which all the elements of supposedly successful relationships are set out on the counter to be bought like painkillers and frozen peas. We are presented with a world of things rather than feelings: possessions rather than rights; separateness rather than relationship. Capitalism poisons our lives with a concentration on consumption, materialism and competition, undermining our relationships with family, friends and lovers. Yet, alongside the system's violence and destruction, pollution and oppression - largely in direct response to it - there is a growing grassroots struggle for revolutionary change. An important part of this revolutionary movement is the struggle for sexual liberation.

Human relationships are power relationships and in capitalist society, our lives are dominated by alienation, authoritarianism and hierarchy. While I do not believe that we can create totally liberated relationships within capitalism, I do think that people should assist each other to be as free as possible, while trying not to hurt other people. Of course, this is incredibly difficult. For me sexual liberation is not about how often I have sex, or how many people I have sex with. Rather it is about trying to gain control of our bodies, our lives and the liberation of sexual relations from the restrictions of capitalist ideas and practices. While many activists regularly discuss and debate questions of sexuality, I believe we need more discussion and a renewed awareness of love, in order to assist the struggle for sexual liberation.

Loving relationships have been undermined through the development of property as the basis of human relations and sexuality has been put on the open market and sold like a washing powder. The use of love and sex by the mass media and consumer culture, to sell commodities, has made both appear hollow, as we are increasingly encouraged to find emotional satisfaction in private experiences linked to consumption. Love and sex are stripped of their best aspects and repackaged as a set of product choices. I was in town just before Valentine's Day and where-ever I went there were red hearts and the word "love" plastered all over displays of chocolates, photo frames, perfume, boxer shorts, CDs, videos, books, magazines, etc. Love seemed to be on sale everywhere. However, love is not a Hallmark advertising gimmick, you can't buy love. But, you can buy sex. The "sex industry", including the production and sale of pornography, sex aids, phone sex lines, brothels, escort agencies etc., is huge and growing. Sex is increasingly a service or product to be bought and sold, in a market for which people must compete. People are reduced to sex objects to be used, possessed, rented, sold and traded.

Consumer culture promotes the idea that being a desirable sex object gives you power. As capitalism divides and separates us, presenting love and sex as based on ownership and control it teaches us to treat each other as possessions and commodities. We are told we must compete in a personality market to be the best looking, have the coolest clothes, car, job etc., in order to get the person who looks the best, has the coolest clothes, etc. Much of corporate imagery and ideology aims to arouse people using the sexy qualities of wealth and fashionable products, playing on people's feelings of powerlessness, alienation and inadequacy and reinforcing sexual repression. Corporations sell many products by using love, sex, the allure of sexual attraction and even sexual liberation. Just as consumers are seduced by products that are made to appear as if the come from nowhere - their production in factories where the exploitation of labour is ferocious, is hidden away when they are presented in the market - people are also seduced by polished images of desirable people in desirable situations where the exploitation and oppression is also hidden. On one hand we are swamped by images of perfect couples and fed the idea that someone will come and save us and make everything all right. On the other, we are constantly reminded that relationships have a "use by date". Capitalism uses "built in obsolescence", a short-term limit on the use of products, to boost consumption and profits. In the same way, people's personalities and relationships are increasingly marketed and perceived as another fashion accessory with a short-term use value based on self gratification, performance and competition.

Attempts at liberation, including sexual liberation, are met by two forms of response by the ruling class - frontal assault and co-option. The establishment seeks to neutralise any threat and tries to convert it into something useful to their own ends. Capitalism seeks to harness the sexual demands of people by distorting them, integrating them, exploiting them for profit and using them to reinforce capitalist social relations. In response to challenges to sexual oppression this involves creating the illusion that alienated sex is sexual freedom. The removal of some sexual repression, by the freeing up of sexual community customs, can make way for sexual practices that mask a deeper repression - the repression of love making. Today, many people believe they are challenging the boundaries of sexual customs, but what are sexual customs? Are they the sort of sexual relationships often seen on TV shows such as Sex in the City, Seinfeld, Jerry Springer or Ally McBeal? Here short-term, shallow relationships based on self interest are regularly portrayed as the norm and as a natural result of the coming together of self absorbed and greedy individuals, with the repressive and exploitative nature of the relationships condoned, hidden or denied.

There are many questions that need to be considered if you are going to have a sexual relationship with someone. Issues of

safety, trust, respect and power. Sexual relationships are deeply affected by power relations and can be very different depending on whether those involved are friends, long term partners, boss/worker, teacher/student, children and so on. Economic, sexual, racial and other power inequalities stunt and distort all of our relationships and undermine attempts at sexual liberation. Until there is fundamental change to the whole of society, a social revolution, human relationships will be affected by the inequalities and exploitation inherent in the capitalist system. Therefor, sexual liberation cannot occur in isolation, it needs to be part of a struggle against sexual abuse and assault, patriarchy, sex/sexuality discrimination, sexism, sexual exploitation, the sexual division of work and the whole oppressive, exploitative and violent structure of capitalist society.

Capitalist social relationships are so narrow and restricted that one of the commonest feelings that we have in our relationships is of being trapped and tied down. It can feel as if everybody and everything is forcing us to be a certain way and to play a particular role. We can feel powerless to change anything, as though we have no choice but to carry on in the same way day after day. At the same time as feeling powerless, there is often something safe and predictable about a situation we have grown used to. We can feel that things would be worse and more difficult if we attempted to change our situation. We give our power away, and accept being told what to do and how to be. For many people intimate relationships, whether sexual or not, have a great deal of pain and grief associated with them. The roots of this pain lie deep in our individual and collective pasts. Because we have grown up in a very repressed society most of us never received enough love and positive touching. Authoritarianism, alienation and repression have dominated our lives and many of us have grown up afraid of the violence, anger and abuse of our parents or other adults. The resulting insecurity has meant we have little confidence when it comes to dealing with our feelings and emotions. It is incredibly hard to learn to trust people or manage relationships, when you are exposed to regular domination, abuse or violence.

But, the idea that loving relationships must always involve pain, regret or self sacrifice denies our ability to choose and to change. Close relationships, can and do, help to counter depression, anxiety and stress. Creating more love can help to closely connect people, combat loneliness, build honesty, trust and solidarity. The distortion imposed on the word 'love' by the capitalist system shouldn't prevent our revolution from being loving in character and proclaiming the importance of love. It is love that gives meaning and purpose to our lives. Love makes it possible for individuals to connect to others in a meaningful way, to risk being honest and spontaneous together, to unite through

sharing and come to know each other in profound ways. Love is a celebration of solidarity, an act of courage and a commitment to other people and the cause of liberation. Genuine acts of love generate other acts of freedom. If you do not love the world, if you do not love life, if you do not love people, how can you help build a better world?

Communicating as honestly as possible with those you care about and who care about you, having courage to express what you think and how you feel about things, is central to building good relationships. Many people find it easier to discuss about sex, than they do about love and affection. But, everybody needs love, closeness and warmth; in order to live a fulfilled and satisfying life. Love requires a belief in people, an ability to trust their power to make and remake, to create and recreate, to change. Our ability to love and be loved comes from knowing that we are loving and lovable and many people are unsure if they have ever been loved. Therefor, I believe that we should all attempt to act in loving ways, share our knowledge and power, listen to each other, help to look after each other and try to create a living alternative to the dominant capitalist social relations. That we need to build love in our families, amongst our friends, at work or play, and throughout our communities and that this process is at the heart of sexual and social liberation.

The power to control your life, to choose your future, especially in the face of rampant oppression, is often a difficult thing to even imagine. It helps if you can begin to see what and who it is, that has an investment in keeping you powerless. Sharing and caring can then be built on the basis of a clearer understanding of our social reality and in support of people having power over their own lives. Liberation requires our self determination and solidarity and at present there is no exact way of achieving these things, only a struggle for them. While self and social awareness is important, if we want real and long-term change we must turn our awareness into action. Most of us can think of many ways in which we would like to change our lives. The problem is often that the changes seem enormous that we can't see any way of achieving them. I think it is important for us to remember that small changes can add up to larger changes, that individual changes can eventually add up to social trends. If we really believe in liberation, in freedom, we have to consider deeply how we relate to other people. Positive relationships are based on a combination of the ability to rely on others for support, supporting other people, doing our own thing and letting others do their own thing. We all need people we can depend on, but we also need our independence. Good friendships involve intimacy, doing things together and finding our happiness in the happiness of others.

The women's and gay liberation movements and more recently the men's movement are all part of a growing understanding that the personal is political. Today, people choose to question and challenge sexual boundaries, oppression and repression in a wide variety of ways. Some people choose to do this through developing "open" relationships of various types, through celibacy, having a special relationship with a partner, they may participate in political struggles or organisations, they may write, sing, play or teach, they may try all of these and more. There is no single way to struggle for, or achieve sexual liberation. The social order we have grown up in, has incredible power over our lives and our relationships. But, our personal action, what we do and how we do it, is also important and powerful. Our actions can help change the world and the action of millions can create a more caring society based on love. Developing liberation from below involves building pleasure, joy, compassion, intimacy, passion, tenderness and friendship wherever possible. The ability to support loving relationships is at the heart of that struggle.

-Nick Southall

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What is Revolutionary Action?

Revolutionary Action (RA) has been established by a group of people committed to a revolutionary transformation of society based on the united power of the working class. To achieve this aim we support the self- mobilisation and self - organisation of the working class, who make up the vast majority of society. RA believes that only the collective democratic action of the oppressed can create a society based upon the fullest possible political democracy.

RA is for people who call themselves anarchists, socialists, communists or whatever, to come together and fight against capitalism and it's effects. Revolutionary Action is a collective not a political party. Within the boundaries that the collective explicitly believes, that the way to create a better world is through revolutionary workers' self-liberation, the greatest amount of pluralism and debate is encouraged. Decisions of the collective may be publicly disagreed with and openly challenged by individual members or factions formed where a group of members disagree with the majority. RA has no central body and no hierarchy. All decisions are made by the general membership and any administrative positions are without privilege, recallable and will only exist to administer decisions of the membership.

RA supports the development of action and ideas that promote the concept of self management and try to counter and prevent bureaucracy, hierarchy and elites from emerging in our movement. We envisage a successful revolution being the result, not of a forcible seizure of state power nor the winning of an election, but of mass democratic action. RA wants to help build working class power. We do not seek leadership, but rather, try to assist ongoing struggles while drawing out and articulating their revolutionary implications. RA wants to be a flexible and innovative organisation that can help to educate and organise people. We aim to create, maintain and broaden networks in the revolutionary movement and try to incorporate into every aspect of our practice democracy, an absence of authoritarianism or hierarchy. Through a democratic, militant and dynamic struggle against capitalism we aim to help transform ourselves, our class and the world. Revolutionary Action wants to help make it possible for people to gain control of their everyday lives and to help make life as marvelous and fulfilling as it can be.

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